

# ASK, DON'T TELL

## A Vital Foundation of Successful Coaching

**HAVE YOU EVER** approached someone in hopes of discussing a challenge you were facing only to be told what to do? Rather than listening to your situation, evaluating solutions, and helping you recognize and overcome excuses and obstacles, you were brushed aside and directed how, when, and what to do to "fix" your predicament. How did that make you feel?

Most often, telling people what to do causes resentment, confusion, and lack of trust. This is precisely why successful coaching revolves around asking and involving as opposed to telling and demanding.

### Nurturing Mutual Trust

In many managerial relationships, trust is simply not a consideration. The manager is in a position of responsibility and the employee is to do as the manager says. End of story. Coaching relationships are much more effective because managers become involved in the daily lives of their employees. Mutual trust is built and nurtured as both manager and employee learn to ask questions and plot a course of success.

### Reaching An Agreement

It is usually the case in manager/employee relationships that the manager tells the employee what has gone wrong and requests or demands a change in behavior. This type of communication frequently leads to bitterness on the employees' parts followed by begrudging compliance to whatever action was ordered.

An old proverb states something to the effect of: "A man who changes his mind against his will has not



changed his mind at all." Paraphrased: employees may comply if forced, but they will not agree or change their inherent behavior. So, why not help the employee to agree?

### Explore Alternatives

Take the agreement stage one step further and help your employees to

see that there are alternatives to the behavior he or she has been displaying. Help the employee to think of what could be done in place of the undesired behavior. While a manager would specify an alternative and instruct the employee to implement it immediately, a coach would discuss the alternatives and help the employee to select the best option on his/her own.

Through coaching, you can equip your employee to self-evaluate and determine that a negative behavior exists, where it came from, the consequences of not changing the behavior, and the benefits associated with changing the behavior. By evaluating facts and past performance, you can guide your employees to readily self-identify the specific behaviors that are holding them back from achieving their goals and how to overcome these roadblocks.

The employee is more cooperative because they feel as though they have more control over their professional destiny, and - in fact - they do.

### Overcoming Excuses

We often feel it necessary to offer an excuse for why we behaved in a **▶ continued on page 2**



### LETTER FROM KATHI GRAHAM-LEVISS

Effective listening is a vital tool for any coach. By showing your employees they have your full attention, you create a strong bond that supports your relationship and encourages growth. There are several common denominators good listeners share. Here are three of the most important.

**1)** Don't assume you know what the other person is going to say. Many times you'll be surprised if you stop jumping to conclusions and allow the employee to have their say.

**2)** Avoid distracting behavior. If you're shuffling papers, glancing out the window, or looking at your watch, your employee is painfully aware that they are an inconvenience. Give your full attention.

**3)** Try to put yourself in the shoes of your employee. Empathize with them so you can fully understand the situation and how to best offer assistance. Becoming a great listener doesn't take much time or work, but the return is overwhelmingly worth the investment.

*continued from page 1* ◀

certain way. It seems we believe that giving a “reason” will justify when we have strayed from our course. Allowing employees to state excuses, however, offers no help in overcoming obstacles so that they can move forward.

In managerial situations, it is commonplace for employees to be reprimanded for giving excuses. However, in coaching environments, it is best to allow the employee to examine their behavior and decide that excuses are not beneficial.

The differences in coaching and managing are vast. However, the primary key to successful coaching lies in the fact that coaches ask, they don't tell. By directly involving the employee in the discussions and actions of plotting a course, correcting mistakes, and accomplishing goals you receive more rapid and longer-lasting results.

## The 6 Characteristics of A Successful Coach

IT TAKES SOME special talents and behaviors to be a successful coach. In order to direct and positively impact the professional lives of those in your charge, you'll need to exhibit the following:

- 1 Empathy** - Remember when you were the employee? Put yourself into those shoes again and identify with the emotions, thoughts, and feelings of others.
- 2 Compassion** - Genuine concern for your employees is paramount. Yes, you want them to do a wonderful job and to perform to the best of their ability, but you should also feel and show authentic caring for the overall person.
- 3 Communication** - Since coaching, in its most basic sense, is a series of informal conversations, you'll want to have the skills to interact with employees freely and effectively.
- 4 Organization** - As a coach, you'll want to stay on track with the progress your employees are making. Follow-through is vital in order to help employees move forward with their plans of action.
- 5 Patience** - Being a coach can sometimes be challenging. Be prepared to take lots of deep breaths.
- 6 Well-Roundedness** - Politically savvy, organizationally cultured, and a proactive management style all combine to create a well-rounded person who is capable of sharing with his/her employees in order to help them achieve.

As a coach, you are responsible for shaping people's lives, not simply following an agenda and meeting monetary goals. The behaviors listed above will help you in your quest to develop your own coaching style so you can bolster the careers of those on your team.

# MENTORING:

## Relationships That Build Companies

IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY, Mentor was the half-human, half-god entrusted by Odysseus with the teaching and upbringing of his son, Telemachus, while he was absent on his many travels. Trustworthy, credible, but unreachable, “Mentor” soon became the epitome of wise counsel and sage instruction. Mentoring is a relationship that gives people the opportunity to share their professional and personal skills and experiences, and to grow and develop in the process.

Typically, it is a one-to-one relationship between a more experienced and a less experienced employee. It is based upon encouragement, constructive comments, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share.

Mentoring is a relationship, not just a procedure or activity, where one person professionally assists the career development of another outside the normal manager/subordinate relationship. (*S. Mind, “Business and Mentor Coaching” Training and Development.*)

Mentoring is a deliberate pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a lesser skilled or experienced one, with the agreed upon goal of having the less experienced person grow and develop specific competencies. (*M. Murray and M. Owen, Beyond the Myths of Mentoring: How to facilitate an Effective Mentoring Program, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1991.*)

Designing an effective mentoring program really means putting in place the culture, resources and structure necessary for two or more people to develop an effective relationship, which will positively affect the development of at least one of them.

The mentoring program is usually a fixed length (six to fifteen months), and is restricted to the objectives of the program.

### Why Establish A Mentoring Program?

Due to the tight labor market and the increasing difficulty in recruiting talent, companies are focusing more closely on developing managers and executives internally through coaching and mentoring programs. That is the finding of a survey of more than 300 companies nationwide by Manchester Inc., a career management and management consulting firm.

About 6 out of 10 [59%] organizations currently offer coaching or other developmental counseling to their managers and executives, according to the survey. Another 20% of organizations said they plan to offer such coaching within the next year.

In addition, one-quarter [25%] of organizations have already set up formal mentoring programs, with another 25% planning to do so within the next 12 months, according to the survey.

Companies are providing coaching to managers and executives for both leadership development and corrective reasons. The top reasons given for offering coaching or other developmental counseling include:

- To sharpen the leadership skills of high potential individuals [86%].
- To correct management behavior problems such as poor communication skills, failure to develop subordinates, or indecisiveness [72%].

► *continued on page 3*

## MENTORING

continued from page 3 ◀

- To ensure the success, or decrease the failure rate, of newly promoted managers [64%].
- To correct employee relations problems such as poor interpersonal skills, disorganization, demeaning or arrogant behavior [59%].
- To provide the required management and leadership skills to technically oriented employees [58%].

The top reasons given for establishing mentoring programs are:

- To promote the retention of valued employees [73%].
- To improve employees' leadership and managerial skills [71%].
- To develop new leaders [66%].
- To enhance employees' career development [62%].
- To put high potential individuals on the fast career track [49%].
- To promote diversity [48%].
- To improve employees' technical knowledge [30%].

they wanted to develop by luring them away from other businesses with generous raises and other perks. "Not only has this become more difficult, but employers have found that even when desired executives were hired, they didn't always fit in well with the company's culture and management style," Warrenfeltz said.

"Companies have realized they can't continue throwing money at the problem and are taking a closer look at developing their in-house managerial and executive talent," Warrenfeltz said. "Coaching and mentoring programs are becoming valuable developmental and retention tools for many organizations."

For additional information about coaching and mentoring programs, contact XB Coaching today.

Coaching or other developmental counseling programs			
Industry	CURRENTLY PROVIDED	PLAN TO IN NEXT YEAR	% OF NEXT YEAR
Banking/Financial Services	66%	13%	21%
Consulting/Business Services	63%	14%	20%
Retail/Wholesale	62%	38%	5%
Health Care	60%	27%	10%
Manufacturing	60%	21%	23%
Nonprofit/Government/Education	50%	15%	14%
Computers/High-Tech	33%	38%	7%

Mentoring Programs			
Industry	CURRENTLY PROVIDED	PLAN TO IN NEXT YEAR	% OF NEXT YEAR
Banking/Financial Services	31%	26%	21%
Consulting/Business Services	30%	22%	20%
Retail/Wholesale	27%	24%	23%
Health Care	20%	17%	10%
Manufacturing	18%	24%	14%
Nonprofit/Government/Education	14%	38%	7%
Computers/High-Tech	0%	54%	5%

"It's becoming harder and harder to replace people in this tight labor market," said Rodney Warrenfeltz, national practice leader for Manchester Inc.'s Consulting Practice. "Companies are showing a resurgence of interest in providing coaching and other developmental counseling to managers and executives who might have been terminated in a less competitive recruitment environment."

It used to be easier for employers to hire executives and managers

## Meet Dave McKeon



Dave is a nationally recognized Executive, Business & Career Coach who makes a powerful impact in the organizations he works with. He is able to serve corporate leaders, professionals and small business owners

around the world in the areas of leadership, systemic thinking and collaborative management behavior.

Dave has over 30-years of diverse senior management and worldwide leadership experience in hi-tech and Fortune 500 manufacturing firms. He has also launched and sold two small companies, putting him in a prime position to relate to and work with managers and employees on all levels.

Having led international teams, Dave managed regional shared service centers and spearheaded organizational startup efforts among his other achievements. His experience plays a tremendous role in his ability to develop and implement programs specific to an organization that have amazing outcomes.

Dave has served as VP of Consulting Services since he joined XB Coaching.



# Tool of the Month

## LEARN TO BE AN EFFECTIVE COACH

COACHING IS A TREMENDOUS way to empower people and help them fulfill their potential. However, it takes a special behavioral aptitude and specific training to be an effective coach.

Here's what *Business Week Magazine* had to say about coaching. "...Research from Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management shows that the impact of coaching-like training can last seven years. The emotional-intelligence skills coaches specialize in help [people] create more productive cultures, which in turn drive up profits..."

In the Learning To Be An Effective Coach workshop, you'll discover strategies for:

- Encouraging others to establish goals and targets for further performance improvement.
- Monitoring and reviewing progress in achieving their goals.
- Identifying problems that may be adversely affecting progress.
- Generating alternatives and an action plan for dealing with identified problems.
- Improving understanding of behaviors others must exhibit to be successful in the work environment.
- Realizing full potential.

### Mentoring

Have you thought about how to take advantage of your top performers and the collective knowledge base of new or growing employees? Mentoring is a phenomenal way to do that. A mentor supports another individual, and is concerned with that person's growth. Through an independent relationship with their mentee, a mentor is concerned for the individual as a person, not just as an employee. The mentor/mentee relationship is not one based on power or authority. In order to achieve such a relationship that is beneficial to both parties involved, it is imperative to setup a stable and productive mentoring program.

Let XB take you through their process to help you create, implement and execute a mentoring program. You'll be introduced to the 9-steps for creating a successful mentoring program. Through the use of these steps and a comprehensive mentoring model, you will unlock ways to:

- Promote the retention of valued employees.
- Improve employees' leadership and managerial skills.
- Develop new leaders.
- Enhance employees' career development.
- Put high potential individuals on the fast career track.
- Promote diversity.
- Improve employees' technical knowledge.

### While at the same time:

- Offering insights into the culture and unwritten rules of the organization.
- Providing a supportive environment in which successes and failures can be evaluated.
- Improving understanding of the mentees' roles in the organization.
- Giving a powerful learning tool to acquire competencies and professional experience.

For additional information, costs, and scheduling for The Coaching Workshop, contact us today at 401-682-2859 or email [support@xbcoaching.com](mailto:support@xbcoaching.com).

Have employees that chronically make excuses? Instead of enabling them, ask that they name three ways they can take responsibility for their actions. Also ask how they plan to overcome the obstacle named in their excuse so it doesn't happen in the future.

Don't point fingers at employees with behavioral issues. Instead, get your employee to agree that certain behaviors are undesirable and should be changed. Once they do, show them that they have been exhibiting the undesirable behavior. You'll quickly see a change.